

The third of the new Latin American trade agreements that my administration negotiated is with Panama. This agreement will immediately eliminate tariffs on 88 percent of our industrial and consumer goods exports to Panama. It will increase access for American farmers and ranchers, and it will open opportunities for American businesses to participate in the multibillion dollar project to expand the Panama Canal.

As we work to pass these trade agreements with nations in Latin America, we'll also work to pass a landmark free trade agreement with an ally in the Far East, South Korea. This agreement would open up one of the world's most powerful economies to more American goods and services exports. This agreement is projected to add more than \$10 billion to America's economy. And like our agreements in Latin America, this agreement would strengthen our relationship with a democratic partner in a critical part of the world.

I know many Americans feel uneasy about new competition and worry that trade will cost jobs. So the Federal Government is providing substantial funding for trade adjustment assistance that helps Americans make the transition from one job to the next. We are working to improve Federal job-training programs, and we are providing strong support for America's community colleges, where people of any age can go to learn new skills for a better, high-paying career.

Expanding trade will help our economy grow. By passing these trade agreements, we will also serve America's security and moral interests. We will strengthen our ties with our friends. We will help counter the false populism promoted by hostile nations. And we will help young democracies show their people that freedom, openness, and the rule of law are the surest path to a better life. So I call on Congress to act quickly and get these agreements to my desk.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on October 12 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 13. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 12 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at Stribling Packaging, Inc., in Rogers, Arkansas

October 15, 2007

The President. One of the reasons I've stopped by this facility here in Arkansas is to remind people that small business is the backbone of our economy. These good folks are making a living; more importantly, they're providing labor for people here in this facility. And that's what we want. We want people working in America. We've gone through now 49 consecutive months of uninterrupted job growth—that's a record for the United States.

And one of the reasons why is, our small-business owners are working hard. And another reason why is, we've got people in the United States Congress who understand the role of government, and that is not to get in the way of business, but it's to create an environment where businesses flourish. And when people are buying this man's boxes, it also means they're buying product at the retail level.

And so I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come by.

Bill Stribling. Absolutely.

The President. Appreciate the opportunity to meet your workers. As I was walking around, I was shaking the workers' hands. He said, "That's good that you're meeting them. After all, they're the reason this business is growing." And I appreciate a man who understands that. Thanks for your hospitality.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Bill Stribling, president, Stribling Packaging, Inc.

Remarks on the Federal Budget and a Question-and-Answer Session in Rogers

October 15, 2007

The President. Thank you all. Thank you very much. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. I may just take off my jacket, if that's all right. [Laughter] I hope I didn't spill any sauce on my shirt after I had barbecue at the Whole Hog. [Laughter] Thanks for coming. Thanks for giving me a chance